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President: Mr. Gurirab . . . . . (Namibia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ingólfsson (Iceland), Vice-President took the chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 3 (*continued*)

Credentials of representatives to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly

(b) Report of the Credentials Committee (A/54/475)

The Acting President: The draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 14 of its report reads as follows:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Having considered* the report of the Credentials Committee and the recommendation contained therein,

"*Approves* the report of the Credentials Committee."

We shall now take action on the recommendation of the Credentials Committee set forth in paragraph 14 of its report.

The Credentials Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/6).

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of vote.

May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Mahmoudi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am taking the floor to express our reservation regarding the part of the report of the Credentials Committee contained in document A/54/475 that pertains to the credentials of Israel.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 3.

Agenda item 7

Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General (A/54/398)

The Acting President: As members are aware, in accordance with the provisions of Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations and with the consent of the Security Council, the Secretary-General is mandated to notify the General Assembly of matters

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relative to the maintenance of international peace and security that are being dealt with by the Security Council and of matters with which the Council has ceased to deal.

In this connection, the General Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General issued as document A/54/398.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 16

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(b) Election of twenty-nine members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

The Acting President: Pursuant to General Assembly decision 43/406, the Assembly will proceed to the election of 29 members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 1999.

The 29 outgoing members are Algeria, Australia, Benin, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Finland, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Italy, the Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Samoa, Slovakia, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Those States are eligible for immediate re-election.

I should like to remind members that after 1 January 2000, the following States will still be members of the Governing Council: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, China, the Comoros, Cuba, France, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malawi, Nigeria, Norway, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United States of America, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

Therefore, those 29 States are not eligible in this election.

As the Assembly is aware, in accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

However, I would like to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should be standard unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on that basis?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Regarding candidatures, I have been informed by the Chairmen of the regional groups as follows:

For the eight seats of the African States, the eight endorsed candidates are Benin, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Senegal and Uganda.

For the seven seats of the Asian States, the seven endorsed candidates are India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Marshall Islands, Pakistan, Samoa, Saudi Arabia and Thailand.

For the three seats of the Eastern European States, the three endorsed candidates are Poland, the Republic of Moldova and Slovakia.

For the five seats of the Latin American and Caribbean States, the five endorsed candidates for the five seats are the Bahamas, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Suriname.

For the six seats of the Western European and other States, the six endorsed candidates are Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Since the number of candidates endorsed by the African States, the Asian States, the Eastern European States, the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Western European and other States corresponds to the number of seats to be filled in each region, may I take it that the General Assembly decides to elect those

candidates as members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme for a four-year term beginning on 1 January 2000?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The following 29 States have thus been elected members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme for a four-year term beginning on 1 January 2000: Bahamas, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Denmark, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Marshall Islands, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovakia, Suriname, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I congratulate the States that have been elected members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme.

This concludes our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 16.

Agenda item 17

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(g) Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences

Note by the Secretary-General (A/54/107)

The Acting President: As indicated in document A/54/107, since the terms of office of Chile, Fiji, France, Gabon, Japan, Namibia and the Russian Federation will expire on 31 December 1999, it is necessary for the President of the General Assembly to appoint, during the current session, seven members to fill the resulting vacancies. The members so appointed will serve for a period of three years beginning on 1 January 2000.

After consultations with the Chairmen of the groups of African States, Asian States, Eastern European States, Latin American and Caribbean States as well as Western European and other States, I have appointed Chile, Equatorial Guinea, France, Japan, Namibia, the Philippines and the Russian Federation as members of the Committee on Conferences, with effect from 1 January 2000.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of these appointments?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 17?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 29

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/308)

Draft resolution (A/54/L.12)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Burkina Faso to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.12.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): In the context of the General Assembly's consideration of agenda item 29, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference", I have the pleasant duty of introducing, on behalf of the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), draft resolution A/54/L.12.

In its preambular part, the draft resolution begins by recalling the various relevant resolutions and recommendations recognizing the legal existence of the Organization of the Islamic Conference as a subject of international law, a reality that formed the basis of resolution 3369 (XXX) of 10 October 1975, by which the General Assembly decided to invite the Organization of the Islamic Conference to participate in the sessions and the work of the Assembly in the capacity of observer.

The draft then spells out the reasons for, and above all the benefits of, the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, because both pursue the same ideal and the same goals. These are, at the political level, the quest for peace with a view to bringing about a better and more united world; at the economic level, the promotion of genuine development for the benefit of all countries and all peoples, which is a *sine qua non* condition for the establishment of the true collective security to which we

all aspire; and, at the social level, human freedom through the promotion of human security.

In its operative part, the draft resolution first takes note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General, which encourages the United Nations and the OIC to continue to strengthen their cooperation in view of the increasingly important role played by the OIC in the international arena, in particular with respect to the implementation of the objectives of the United Nations in the areas of security, disarmament, decolonization, human rights, economic development and technical cooperation.

In this connection, the draft recommends that in order to render this complementarity even more effective and harmonious, the United Nations and the OIC should strongly encourage meetings, particularly high-level meetings, between the leaders of both organizations. It recommends also that, if possible, they consider convening next year a conference of the two organizations with the goal of further strengthening and enhancing their cooperation through dialogue and consultation.

Furthermore, the text urges that, in view of the special relationship between the United Nations and the OIC, the United Nations provide technical and other forms of assistance to the Organization of the Islamic Conference. In order for such cooperation to remain forever a dynamic reality, it requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on all efforts undertaken in order for the two organizations to work side by side towards the same goal.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference, which currently comprises 56 member States and four observers, is therefore an active force on the international scene of which the international community must take account. The OIC has proved its maturity and credibility. At its most recent regular ministerial meeting, held last July in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, several resolutions were adopted representing the contributions made by the Islamic Ummah to the establishment of a world of peace and fraternity. That meeting considered objectively the situation in Kosovo, in Afghanistan, in Kashmir and in Somalia, among others. It considered also the issues of globalization, the continuing deterioration in the terms of trade and the debt problem of the developing countries. It took a hard look at the structural distortions and discriminatory treatment that are currently undermining the United Nations system and especially the Security Council, and it advocated solutions and recommended measures with respect to all of these issues. In other words, the OIC has thus demonstrated that it is an instrument in the service of peace, development and solidarity among people. It is therefore in the interests of the United Nations to use such an instrument in the context of its mission to work towards a world of justice and peace.

As the facts speak for themselves, I do not need to explain further. I am firmly convinced that the Assembly will fully support draft resolution A/54/L.12, which I have the honour of submitting to it for consideration and adoption.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Bangladesh is happy to participate in the debate on agenda item 29, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference" today in the plenary General Assembly. We commend the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his concise and focused report on this agenda item in document A/54/308. We appreciate his efforts in promoting enhanced cooperation between the two organizations.

The United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) have been working in close cooperation in the political, economic, social, humanitarian, cultural and technical fields. The two organizations share common objectives in addressing global issues, including international peace, fundamental human rights and economic and social development. My delegation believes that increasing cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC and its organs and institutions contributes to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations and its Charter.

While my delegation welcomes the strengthening of cooperation between the two Organizations, allow me to point out here that we have not yet been able to be successful in harnessing the actual mechanism of such cooperation. The two organizations have actively participated in enhancing the objectives of international peace and security, development and social justice. We have observed with satisfaction that the United Nations, with its funds, programmes and specialized agencies, and the OIC, with its subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions, have been working together to complement each other.

The Secretary-General's report contains detailed information on actions to follow up the recommendations of the meetings between the United Nations system and the OIC, including cooperation in the field of economic and social development. From the report, we know that

the United Nations system and concerned OIC institutions worked closely during the past year in different fields through exchanges of information and other activities. My delegation is happy to learn from the report about the level of active cooperation between the OIC and the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Food Programme and other bodies of the United Nations system.

We have noticed that in recent years the international community has prioritized certain areas of cooperation, such as peace-building, peacekeeping, preventive deployment and preventive diplomacy. We the members of the OIC have also been actively contributing in this regard. We are happy to observe that the cooperation between United Nations and the OIC in this field has been on the increase for quite some time. My delegation firmly believes that the cooperation between the two organizations in these fields should continue.

I am happy to announce that my delegation is a sponsor of draft resolution A/54/L.12, under agenda item 29, on the continuation of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. I urge States Members of the United Nations to adopt the draft resolution by consensus as a mark of solidarity with the Islamic world.

Mr. Vural (Turkey): It is my privilege to address the General Assembly this morning on agenda item 29, which covers the status of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations has proved to be an important dimension of the international system. Since its establishment, the Organization of the Islamic Conference has acted as an indispensable forum for cooperation and solidarity among its member States. We fully believe that the organization has the potential to play a more influential role in global issues.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference is one of those major regional organizations which can contribute to and benefit from the work of the United Nations. Interaction between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference can address a variety of issues, ranging from peacemaking to cultural development and from the protection of the environment to the fight against terrorism and illicit drug trafficking.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference covers a vast geographical area and a large population dispersed over four continents. It represents a rich diversity of cultures and political systems, taking as a common denominator the heritage of Islam, a name that literally derives from the word "peace". The Organization of the Islamic Conference gains profound historical and political experience through its members, which enables it to be an important instrument of peace and stability in the world.

The report presented by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference indicates a welcome deepening of relations between the two organizations through high-level contacts, regular consultations and technical meetings. My delegation supports this process and calls for its continuation.

The emphasis given in the report to the potential for cooperation in the fields of economic and social development, and particularly in peacemaking efforts, which are a new and a very important dimension, is timely and very important. The prospects of cooperation in all these fields are, indeed, encouraging. The regular consultations between the two organizations, especially on the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, are worth mentioning in this respect. The priority issues on the agenda of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, such as the Middle East, Palestine, Tajikistan, Cyprus, Somalia, Jammu and Kashmir, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nagorny Karabakh and Kosovo, among others, coincide with the issues treated at the United Nations. We believe that joint United Nations and OIC peace initiatives could be useful in some other conflict situations as well.

A general meeting between representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations system and of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and coordination meetings of focal points of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to be organized in the year 2000, will certainly help consolidate the grounds for cooperation.

The special meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to be held at Istanbul in the first months of next year will permit an assessment of the activities of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and will also make it possible to formulate some ideas on promoting future cooperation

between the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations.

My delegation supports the draft resolution introduced by the delegation of Burkina Faso, which calls for the enhancement of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. We hope that such cooperation will further contribute to global efforts for peace and international solidarity.

Mr. Haque (Pakistan): The report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) (A/54/308) summarizes the progress achieved over the past year by the United Nations system and the OIC in promoting their shared goals of international peace, security and development. It is a matter of satisfaction to my delegation that the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference have continued effective contacts and consultations on a number of current political issues, including Afghanistan, the Middle East and Palestine, Somalia and Tajikistan. Their mutually supportive role and their determination to promote negotiations to resolve those conflicts have received wide international support.

We believe that it would be useful for the two organizations to further expand the ambit of such consultations to include situations where no progress has been registered despite the fact that those situations may have the potential to endanger global peace and security. Jammu and Kashmir is one such issue where cooperation between the two organizations would be useful in promoting a just and equitable solution to the problem in accordance with Security Council resolutions on the subject.

We note with appreciation that cooperation between the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference is increasing also in a wide range of socio-economic areas of mutual interest. The report of the Secretary-General includes brief accounts of follow-up action during the past year by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Labour Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations Population Fund.

We are of the view that the two sides should continue to examine ways and means of further expanding and diversifying their cooperation by identifying new areas. Enhanced cooperation would benefit the peoples of the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the membership of the United Nations.

During the debate on this agenda item last year, we expressed concern over the fact that the Permanent Observer Mission of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which has been functioning in New York for more than two decades, does not enjoy formal recognition by the host Government. We expressed the hope that a more helpful attitude would be adopted by the host Government. Unfortunately, the OIC mission continues to be denied the privileges and immunities which are essential for its effective functioning. We understand that the Government of Switzerland has extended the necessary privileges to the OIC Observer Mission in Geneva, facilitating its interaction with the United Nations and with the specialized agencies based in that country. Similar facilities should be extended to the OIC in New York. We would therefore once again urge the host Government to ensure that the OIC Mission is accorded the necessary privileges, as envisaged in Article 105 of the United Nations Charter and in the relevant provisions of the United Nations Headquarters Agreement with the host country.

I would like to conclude by expressing our confidence that cooperation between the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference will continue to flourish. Pakistan, as a member of both those organizations, will continue to work towards promoting greater cooperation and coordination between the two organizations.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): I should like to begin by expressing my delegation's deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the state of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of The Islamic Conference (OIC), contained in document A/54/308. The report gives evidence of a most welcome deepening of relations between the two organizations through high-level contacts, regular consultations and technical meetings. The Secretary-General has in fact touched upon a number of areas on which solid ground for cooperation has already been established. This report demonstrates that a lot has been achieved, although much remains to be done.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference has been taking place over many years of sustained interaction in various spheres of regional cooperation. These close links are a real expression of the cooperation and coordination that are required among international organizations. They demonstrate that the world Organization and regional arrangements can come together to promote peace and security around the globe.

There is no doubt that the relationship between the two organizations is becoming more diversified as far as joint cooperation is concerned. Foremost among the issues of concern to the two organizations are matters related to international peace and security, especially those concerning ongoing peacemaking efforts, which constitute a very important dimension of cooperation between the two organizations. In this respect, joint efforts to resolve the continued crisis in Afghanistan and put an end to the agony and suffering of the Afghan people is one of the priorities of the OIC which also figures prominently in the agenda of the United Nations. We hope that both organizations will continue to maintain close contacts and exchange views on this issue and will try to bring pressure to bear on the parties concerned to abandon bloodshed and militaristic policies and to come to the negotiating table.

With regard to peacemaking efforts, mention has to be made of the efforts undertaken by the OIC to help the international efforts to resolve the Kosovo crisis, which culminated in the negotiations conducted by an OIC ministerial delegation, headed by the Iranian Foreign Minister, who visited a number of the capitals in Europe, particularly in the Balkans. Cooperation between the two organizations in this respect led to the participation of the OIC in the framework of OIC/United Nations cooperation in the Group of Friends of the United Nations Secretary-General for Kosovo. We are pleased to note that the report of the Secretary-General is promising in that it shows that there has been a broad agreement on the value of regular political consultations between the two organizations.

The matter of dialogue among civilizations is on the agenda of the United Nations and the OIC. It has already become one of the main subjects of joint activity between the two organizations. The OIC, as a forum composed of more than 50 member States, represents one fifth of the world's population, spread over nearly all continents. It further represents a rich diversity of cultures and political systems. It is therefore in a position to contribute considerably to the promotion and enrichment of dialogue among civilizations.

The OIC began playing an active role in promoting the idea by organizing the Islamic Symposium on Dialogue among Civilizations, held in Tehran from 3 to 5 May 1999. The symposium, initiated and sponsored by Mr. Seyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Chairman of the Eighth Summit of the OIC, issued the Tehran Declaration on Dialogue among Civilizations. The OIC's twenty-sixth session of Foreign Ministers, in Ouagadougou, adopted the Tehran Declaration and further decided to set up an open-ended high-level group of governmental experts to draft a universal declaration on dialogue among civilizations, as well as a 10-year plan of action in coordination with the United Nations and other relevant organizations.

Similarly, on the initiative of the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on 9 and 10 November 1998 the OIC and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights jointly organized, at the United Nations Office in Geneva, a seminar entitled "Enriching the universality of human rights: Islamic perspectives on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights". That seminar, which forms part of a process for providing Islamic perspectives on the Universal Declaration, was a turning point in the history of cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC, because it dealt with human rights on the one hand, and because it was unprecedented in the 50-year history of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the other. Twenty experts in Islamic law and human rights, selected by the High Commissioner and the OIC, presented their views and perceptions in this seminar. It helped initiate convergence of views and understanding between the two organizations on the important issue of human rights.

Many other activities have been the subject of joint work between the OIC and the United Nations. The Islamic countries have expressed their desire to cooperate with the United Nations on issues of significance such as peacekeeping, confidence-building measures, disarmament, protection and preservation of the environment and combating terrorism and illicit trafficking in drugs, as well as respect for international law in general and the United Nations Charter in particular.

The issues of common interest to the two organizations are by no means confined to what I have attempted to present here. There exist areas of common desire and aim which need to be further developed; to this end, new avenues for better understanding and

strengthened cooperation in various fields should be explored.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as the Chair of the Eighth OIC Summit, is pleased with the result of many years of multilateral and regional cooperation. On the eve of the new millennium, the OIC looks forward to continuing joint activities with the hope and expectation that we will be able to undertake on behalf of all citizens of Islamic countries, as well as human beings across the globe, with continued joint activity in areas that are of high priority for all countries. Without doubt, the new situation at the international level requires ever closer cooperation between regional organizations and the United Nations. We should promote the launching of new programmes, and the OIC is ready to engage in more meaningful and direct activities with the support of the United Nations.

We are confident that the adoption of draft resolution A/54/L.12, just introduced by the Ambassador of Burkina Faso, will serve as another basis for promoting in the coming year joint activities which fall within the common purposes of both organizations, whose goals are to ensure international cooperation in seeking solutions to international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems.

I wish to close by reaffirming the pledge of my Government, as the Chairman of the Eighth OIC Summit, to gear our efforts towards the promotion and strengthening of cooperation between the two organizations.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): We are discussing today the agenda item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference". In this respect, I wish to express our deep appreciation and full support for the report submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/54/308.

Since its inception in 1969, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has been a melting pot for thinking, opinions and consultations, where member States exchange expertise and experience, coordinate their positions and determine common Islamic action to ensure social, economic and cultural progress. It also strives to ensure prosperity and well-being for its peoples, in keeping with the principles of peace and justice provided for in the Charter. Since 1978, when formal cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations began, this cooperation has continued to expand and to encompass new fields. Recent efforts and cooperation by the two organizations focusing on some issues have led to positive results, in particular in the fields of preventive diplomacy, peaceful settlement of conflicts and support for and consolidation of international peace and security.

With its deep commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations and the OIC, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been giving moral and financial support to the OIC. This has enabled that organization to deal with many crises while working to achieve its objectives. At the same time, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has stressed the importance of the OIC as an international force for moderation and peace, in accordance with the tolerant principles of Islam, which support the peaceful settlement of conflicts. The Kingdom also welcomes and commends the desire of the two organizations to continue their close cooperation in political, economic, social and cultural fields and their common endeavour towards maintaining international peace and security.

The OIC has in the past few decades played a constructive role in many different fields. In the political sphere, the OIC has helped contain or defuse many international political conflicts and has worked to promote the peaceful settlement of conflicts. These efforts have had a positive impact on international peace, stability and security. In the economic and social sphere, the OIC has been seeking the establishment and the promotion of large-scale cooperation among its member countries in order to ensure economic and social development and to promote cooperation through multilateral efforts at the international and national levels with a view to establishing a more just international economic order. In the cultural and educational spheres, the OIC has been working to help peoples of the member countries reach the necessary level of education to be able to cope with the developments of our times while upholding the tolerant teachings of Islam. At the same time, the OIC is working vigorously to present a true image of Islam, in the face of efforts by others to link Islam and terrorism, despite the fact that the OIC has condemned all forms of terrorism, including State terrorism.

Although 20 years have elapsed since the OIC United Nations permanent mission began its work, the OIC does not enjoy the same facilities and privileges enjoyed by the United Nations missions of other regional organizations in accordance with the United Nations Headquarters Agreement. We hope that this issue will receive due attention from the authorities responsible for the implementation of the Headquarters Agreement so

that the OIC office can carry out its functions and responsibilities in an integrated manner.

In conclusion I would like to emphasize that my delegation fully supports the draft resolution submitted by Burkina Faso, the chairman-in-office of the OIC's ministerial conference. We hope that the Assembly will adopt this draft resolution by consensus. We also wish the OIC and the United Nations every success in their cooperation in all fields, cooperation aimed at promoting an international community that enjoys peaceful coexistence and security for the prosperity of all peoples throughout the world.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation is pleased to note that since the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) became a permanent observer at the United Nations in 1975, significant progress has been achieved in the cooperation between the two organizations in the political, economic and social areas, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General on this item. The OIC has participated actively in meetings of the United Nations and its subsidiary organs, and it has also entered into cooperation agreements with various United Nations subsidiary organs. Both organizations have shown a strong commitment to finding appropriate solutions to political and economic issues of common interest and concern. Cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC has proven to be an indispensable aspect of international relations.

The OIC was founded 30 years ago not only to strengthen unity and solidarity among the Islamic Ummah community but also to forge cooperation among its members in all areas. Today the OIC is an important international institution serving peace and security and working for a better future for the Muslim community and humanity as a whole.

The Muslim countries must now launch a concerted effort to play an active role in international affairs and the world economy, as the Ummah cannot be a passive recipient of globalization. What is required is nothing short of a mental revolution in the thinking of Muslim countries so that they can avoid becoming shut out by the pace of globalization. In this regard, cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations is essential in order to ensure that the Muslim community has an equitable share of the world economy and of development.

As a member of the OIC and the Security Council, my delegation welcomes the various joint initiatives and missions that have been undertaken by the two organizations in Afghanistan in order to defuse tension and facilitate peaceful settlements of disputes there. As regards Tajikistan, the OIC continues to be a member of the Contact Group that was established as part of the implementation phase of the Tajik peace process. Somalia continues to be a major common concern for both the OIC and the United Nations. It is important for the international community to remain engaged with the problem of Somalia and not allow it to continue to fester indefinitely. The efforts made by both organizations in the Lockerbie case led to the suspension of the sanctions in Libya. We regret that this did not result in the final lifting of the sanctions, which we hope will be possible in the near future.

My delegation concurs with the views expressed by the OIC on the need to resolve expeditiously the current crisis between Iraq and the United Nations so as to alleviate and end the plight of the long-suffering Iraqi people. My delegation shares the concern of the OIC over the fact that the indicted war criminals in Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to remain out of reach of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. We reiterate our call for more robust efforts to deal with these indicted war criminals, who are still at large. We have to aim for consistency in our commitment and action in this regard. Inasmuch as we are making serious efforts to bring a terrorist to justice, through the passage recently of a Security Council resolution, we should not be seen to be less than serious in our determination in respect to apprehending war criminals who have been indicted for war crimes against humanity.

Both organizations have cooperated well at the political level in the peacemaking efforts in the conflicts in Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Somalia, as well as in the peace process in the Middle East and in promoting human rights. Other areas of cooperation include the development of science and technology, trade and development, technical cooperation among Islamic countries, assistance to refugees, food security and agriculture, education and eradication of illiteracy, an investment mechanism and joint ventures, human-resources development, the environment, the development of arts and crafts and the promotion of heritage.

Nevertheless, even though the cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations has always been close, the majority of the OIC countries have not fully benefited from the fruits of this cooperation. Many of them still remain poor and underdeveloped. My delegation believes that it is time for the two organizations to take stock of

the achievements and failures in order to map out new strategies for future cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC. The cooperation at the Secretariat level of the two organizations should be reviewed to make it more effective in responding to the challenges ahead. The new cooperation should be economic in focus and geared towards encouraging enhanced trade and investment flows among the OIC countries and in working towards early reform of the international financial architecture for the benefit of the whole international community.

Malaysia has always played an active role in the OIC. We will continue to play a positive and constructive role in fostering better understanding, solidarity, cooperation and advancement of member countries. Towards this end, Malaysia will be hosting the twenty-seventh session of OIC foreign ministers in Kuala Lumpur in June 2000 and we look forward to the United Nations presence there.

My delegation is pleased to support the draft resolution on cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations that was submitted by Ambassador Kafando, the Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Islamic Group.

My delegation firmly believes that the United Nations is well placed to bridge the gap between the Islamic countries and the rest of the international community through dialogue and cooperation. The Secretary-General has acknowledged the positive role played by the OIC and has long considered the OIC to be a vital partner of the United Nations throughout the Islamic world and beyond.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for the quality of his report and for the thoughtfulness and work he put into it.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has more than 50 member States, representing one fifth of the world's population throughout all the continents. This almost universal representation confers upon the OIC duties and obligations on a world scale. Thus, it is only natural that it should share the goals and principles, as well as the concerns, of the United Nations. Hence, the importance which the States members of the OIC that are also Members of the United Nations attach to cooperation between these two organizations within the framework of a mutually beneficial partnership.

The political will to establish, strengthen and expand that cooperation has allowed the creation of appropriate consultation machinery for combining the efforts of the two organizations in the search for solutions to the crises facing the Islamic Ummah. Among these crises, the question of Palestine, which was central to the creation of the OIC, occupies a special place. My country, Senegal, which holds the chairmanship of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, can testify to the vitality of relations between the United Nations and the OIC on this question.

In the political realm, this cooperation extends to other conflict areas, including Afghanistan, Somalia, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and, more recently, Kosovo. Such conflicts are potential threats to peace and security in the regions concerned and have always afforded opportunities to the two institutions to work in close cooperation by working together to explore and implement ways and means of reducing tensions in those parts of the world. Thus, in the Balkan crisis, the OIC countries worked side by side with the United Nations to provide massive humanitarian assistance to refugees and in the difficult task of building peace in and reconstructing Kosovo.

Preventive diplomacy and the restoration and maintenance of peace are not the sole areas of cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations. This cooperation has increased significantly in recent years to embrace such vast and important areas as economic and social development, environment and refugees — in a word, practically every area of activity of the institutions, programmes and funds of the United Nations system.

It is in this framework that the two organizations continue to coordinate their activities in the context of the 10 priority areas defined by the general meeting of the representatives of the two secretariats and of the organs and agencies of the United Nations and the OIC, held in Geneva in July 1998. These priorities include trade, human resources development, the protection of the environment and the elimination of illiteracy and could even serve as models for the expansion of cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC into other areas.

In this respect, I should like to stress — and take pleasure in doing so — the perfect agreement between the two organizations with regard to the dialogue among civilizations, an idea that was put forward at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly by President Khatami of the Islamic Republic of Iran, current Chairman of the OIC. Subsequently, the General Assembly adopted a resolution designating the year 2001

the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. I am convinced that the two organizations will work closely together in the year 2000 to raise that grand initiative to its full significance.

The contemporary world is experiencing an era of serious and varied challenges that must be met with the determination and common will of the international community as a whole. Cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC is, indeed, one appropriate response to all these challenges. For all these reasons, my delegation supports the consensus adoption of the draft resolution before us in document A/54/L.12, introduced so eloquently by the representative of Burkina Faso, speaking on behalf of the OIC.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): I wish to begin by commending Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the current Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Mr. Seyed Mohammad Khatami, President of Iran, for their commitment to the cooperation between the two organizations and their work to extend it to new fields of common interest. We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The United Nations has, since the beginning, been one of the cornerstones of Norwegian foreign policy. As the problems the international community confronts become more complex, the importance of multilateral negotiations and agreements has increased. So has the role of regional organizations. Norway believes that these organizations constitute important tools for promoting the principles of the United Nations. We consider the Organization of the Islamic Conference a vital partner for the United Nations because of its broad regional influence. We also recognize that the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC reaches far beyond the Islamic world.

Norway fully supports the cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations in their common search for solutions to global problems related to international peace and security, disarmament, self-determination, decolonization, fundamental human rights and economic, social and technical development. We welcome the increasing efforts being made by the United Nations and the OIC to promote international peace and security. Noting the positive development in the Maghreb, we encourage the two organizations to continue strengthening cooperation in the fields of peacemaking and preventive diplomacy. The periodic high-level meetings between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairman of the OIC and the regular contact at the level of the Department of Political Affairs and the Permanent Observer Mission of the OIC to the United Nations are important in this regard.

We particularly request the United Nations and the OIC to renew their efforts to find a negotiated solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. The OIC is playing a crucial role in this transnational conflict involving a number of Islamic countries. The missions to Afghanistan undertaken jointly by the United Nations and the OIC are commendable initiatives. Likewise, coordinated peacemaking efforts in connection with the conflict in Tajikistan constitute an important contribution to the work for peace and stability in the region.

Norway also encourages cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations in countries such as Somalia and in the Balkans.

Cooperation between specialized agencies of the United Nations and the OIC and its subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions serves to extend dialogue to new areas. We are pleased to note that information exchange and cooperation are taking place between the OIC and United Nations agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and the World Bank with a view to enhancing social and economic development.

The Memorandum of Understanding signed by the United Nations Population Fund and the OIC on 2 October 1998 constituted an important follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. We welcome the steps taken towards further implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, especially with regard to Islam and reproductive health, Islam and the status of women and Islam and population and development.

Norway notes with appreciation that agencies of the United Nations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees are working together in areas of common interest. We are also aware that there is cooperation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the OIC, although this cooperation is not mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General. We encourage the dialogue in the human rights field.

The Islamic Commentaries on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are a valuable contribution to a mutual understanding of our joint commitment. Let me also take this opportunity not just to stress the importance of freedom of religion and belief, but also to highlight the role that religious communities can play — including at the non-governmental level — in seeking solutions to conflict. The Oslo Coalition, established in accordance with the mandate of the Oslo Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief, is working with religious and confessional groups to pursue this agenda.

Let me call attention to two further issues: women's rights and the right to education. As Norway stated at the Cairo Conference, women's education is the single most important path to higher productivity and lower infant mortality. We are pleased to note that the education of girls and women is now included in the cooperation programmes between a large number of United Nations and OIC institutions and agencies.

In closing, Norway will again express its appreciation for the commitment of the United Nations and the OIC to develop the cooperation between the two organizations. We hope that this working relationship will be developed further in the years to come.

Mr. Chaouachi (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly is considering today the question of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), a matter that has been considered by the Assembly periodically and on which resolutions are adopted annually for the promotion of such cooperation.

Cooperation between these two organizations means coordination and consultation on all international issues, particularly those that are of interest to today's Islamic world, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter that call for promoting cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. This kind of cooperation is very important as it contributes effectively to the consolidation of the objectives and practices of the Charter in all fields.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference is an example of the kind of cooperation that could be established between an international organization and a regional organization, as is evident in the Secretary-General's comprehensive report (A/54/308) on this question, for which we would like to thank him. During the past year, this cooperation has encompassed several areas, including political, social and humanitarian ones. The two organizations coordinate and hold consultations with each other on a regular basis with a view to finding solutions to issues related to international peace and security, to ending many crises and conflicts and to promoting cooperation and partnership in the economic, social and technical development fields.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC has extended to peacekeeping and preventive diplomacy. The two organizations have consulted with each other on seeking a peaceful solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. We are pleased with this cooperation and urge that further cooperation of this kind prevail in seeking desired peaceful solutions. We also support all other forms of coordination and consultation efforts between these two organizations in all spheres of common interest, including the Kosovo crisis.

I wish to pay tribute to the cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC in all spheres of economic, social and cultural activity. This cooperation has proved how important it is and has been extended to areas of trade, technical cooperation, food security, agriculture, human resources development and assistance to refugees, among other areas. In this connection, we call for greater technical assistance and other forms of support to be given by the United Nations to the OIC and its associate institutions, in order to continue such cooperation. Therefore, we support the draft resolution submitted to the General Assembly on this item, contained in document A/54/L.12.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt)(*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, the Egyptian delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and for the important information contained in the report. Egypt attaches considerable importance to promoting cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter.

Egypt welcomes the first follow-up meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations, which was held in December 1998 in the context of the follow-up work to the high-level meeting with regional organizations held at United Nations Headquarters in July of the same year. We also welcome the participation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in both meetings. The first United Nations follow-up meeting

with regional organizations focused on conflict prevention, marking an important step towards stepped-up implementation of Chapter VIII of the Charter, which clearly delineates the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly in the field of international peace and security.

Egypt is particularly pleased with the follow-up to consultations between the United Nations and the OIC on political questions, particularly those related to the maintenance of international peace and re-establishment of peace, by way of meetings between the two secretaries-general of the two organizations or through regular consultations between high officials on political issues. Such consultations are an important tool for conveying the concerns of member States of the OIC, whose membership is almost one third of the United Nations membership, about issues of common interest for the two organizations, so as to make a real contribution to international efforts designed to find just, comprehensive and balanced answers to these concerns.

We would like to give some examples, though this is not an exhaustive list. We have the questions of Palestine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan and many others related to international peace and security, areas which need concerted efforts on the part of the international community in order to find just political solutions for them.

Conflict prevention was at the heart of the first follow-up meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations. Maintenance of international peace and security is a principal dimension of this question. Economic and social development is another dimension growing in importance at the international level. Therefore, Egypt welcomes the cooperation between the United Nations institutions and agencies that deal with such questions and the relevant institutions of the OIC, which can be seen from the report of the Secretary-General. We hope that this form of cooperation will be reflected in an increased number of specific concrete projects in which entities from both organizations will participate. We also hope that such cooperation will extend to other areas, such as the transfer of technologies to States of the Islamic world and the enhancement of their national capabilities in this vital field, as well as the facilitation of cooperation between those countries, especially as we approach the eve of a new century. We hope that all this can be done with support and cooperation by United Nations institutions and agencies for the OIC special commission on this issue.

Among the main areas of cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC, to which our delegation attaches special importance, is cooperation in the cultural field. The importance of such cooperation is increasing in a world where we currently see repetitions of certain doctrines such as clashes of civilizations. Such doctrines ignore the positive historical interaction between different civilizations, as well as the cumulative contributions by various civilizations to the development of the history of humankind. This clearly includes Islamic civilization and its cultural, scientific and humanistic contributions that certainly cannot be denied.

Egypt welcomes the existing cooperation between the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Islamic Conference in the spheres of education, science and culture and hopes that it will be further strengthened in the form of more international seminars held jointly so that the world may be acquainted with the contributions of Islamic civilization to the history of humankind.

As regards aspects of cooperation between various United Nations organs and bodies and the OIC, I pay tribute to the cooperation of these two organizations in the humanitarian field through coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the OIC, and also through the support given by the OIC and its States to the efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for the provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees.

The Egyptian delegation looks forward to the general meeting of the representatives of the two secretariats of the United Nations system and of the OIC next year as an opportunity for a comprehensive review of development and promotion of the cooperation between the two organizations on the eve of the twenty-first century. In this context, my delegation would like to appeal to the host country, the United States of America, to consider positively the question of dealing with the two permanent observer missions of the OIC and the League of Arab States in New York, that they be treated on an equal footing with the other missions with observer status. As such, these two missions will be able to shoulder their responsibilities in the area of promotion of cooperation between the United Nations and the various regional organizations.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3369 (XXX) of 10 October 1975, I now call on the Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. Lamani (Organization of the Islamic Conference) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, on behalf of the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and on my own behalf, I should like to extend our sincere congratulations to Mr. Gurirab on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session. We are confident that his wide experience and diplomatic skills are the best guarantee that the work of the Assembly will be conducted effectively and decisively.

I should also like to express our profound appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Didier Opertti, for his remarkable success in steering the work of the fifty-third session.

As we consider agenda item 29, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference", I am honoured to review some of the developments that have taken place in the political, economic, social and humanitarian fields during the period under review.

The United Nations and the OIC share a commitment to intensify cooperation and coordination between them and to seek solutions to issues of common concern, such as peace, security, disarmament, self-determination, basic human rights, economic and social development and technical cooperation.

The report of the Secretary-General now before the Assembly, contained in document A/54/308, highlights this cooperation. In this regard, I should like to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his wise leadership of the international Organization and his effective role in the realization of its goals.

I should also like to express our appreciation to the executive heads of the various United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies for their laudable efforts to enhance cooperation between the two organizations for the effective implementation of joint programmes.

In affirmation of the growing needs and common requirements of the member States of the OIC, General Assembly resolution 53/16 of 29 October 1998 called for the strengthening of cooperation between our two organizations in the political, social, economic and humanitarian fields, a detailed review of which is contained in the Secretary-General's report.

These issues were also reviewed at the annual meeting of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OIC, which was held at United Nations Headquarters on 1 October 1999. Moreover, consultations continued between the Secretaries-General of the two organizations with regard to other important and urgent issues of common concern, including the question of Palestine, the situation in the Middle East, Somalia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and other matters.

We look forward to the general meeting between representatives of the Secretariat of the United Nations system and the OIC, as well as the coordination meetings between the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and the OIC and its subsidiary organs and other specialized institutions, which are scheduled to take place in 2000 in Geneva. In those meetings, cooperation and joint activities will be reviewed, and future plans and proposals to enhance and strengthen the mechanisms for cooperation between the two organizations will be discussed.

I should also like to reiterate the concern and interest of the OIC in the matter of the reform of the United Nations and of the Security Council, since the OIC member States have a direct and vital stake in determining the outcome of these reforms. This was affirmed by the most recent annual coordinating meeting of the Foreign Ministers of member States of the OIC, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 1 October 1999.

Turning from the political sphere to the fields of economic and social development, I should like to refer to the report of the Secretary-General, which illustrates the continued progress in the areas of technology, trade, development and technical cooperation among the member States of the OIC, as well as in assistance to refugees, food security, agriculture, education, fighting illiteracy, investment mechanisms, development of human resources and the environment.

In this regard, I am pleased to inform the Assembly that a memorandum of understanding between the OIC and the United Nations Population Fund was signed in 1998 to enhance cooperation in the fields of family and

social education, population census, reproductive health and related questions.

This month, another memorandum of understanding between the OIC and the World Food Programme will be signed to promote cooperation and coordination of activities in areas of common interest.

We are currently conducting negotiations with the United Nations in order to find ways of establishing close cooperation in the area of protecting children during armed conflicts.

The Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso, in his capacity as Chairman of the Islamic Group, has just introduced a draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC, which is before the Assembly in document A/54/L.12 of 21 October 1999. I should like to draw attention to two important paragraphs in the operative part.

Paragraph 3 requests the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to continue to cooperate in their common search for solutions to global problems, such as questions relating to international peace and security, disarmament, self-determination, decolonization, fundamental human rights, social and economic development and technical cooperation. Undoubtedly, this paragraph reaffirms the will of the United Nations to involve the OIC in diplomatic and mediation efforts to find solutions to problems of common concern.

Secondly, paragraph 11 urges the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system, especially the lead agencies, to provide increased technical and other forms of assistance to the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions in order to enhance cooperation. We would welcome such support, as it would strengthen and enhance the capacity of our organization and make its contribution to the joint programmes and activities of the United Nations more effective.

Allow me once more to raise an issue that I had raised in the Assembly during its fifty-third session. However, it is my hope that raising it again might enable us to achieve the desired objective. The issue concerns the facilities and privileges granted to Missions to the United Nations in accordance with the provisions of the Headquarters Agreement. It is well known that, unlike some other regional organizations, the Permanent Observer Mission of the OIC does not fully enjoy these facilities and privileges. As we raise this issue once again, we hope that those responsible for the implementation of the Headquarters Agreement will give it serious consideration and the importance it deserves so that we can discharge our tasks and responsibilities fully and more effectively.

I hope the draft resolution before the Assembly will be adopted by consensus.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm the ongoing interest of the OIC in the continuation of cooperation and coordination with the United Nations and its full commitment to the provisions of the Charter and to the realization of its noble purposes.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.12.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.12?

Draft resolution A/54/L.12 was adopted (resolution 54/7).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 29?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 32

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/420)

Draft resolution (A/54/L.13)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Peru to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.13.

Mr. Picasso (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): As in previous years, the delegation of Peru would like to introduce a draft resolution under agenda item 32 on the basis of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 52/3 — referred to in the Secretary-General's report of 23 September 1998 (A/53/420) — entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System". This draft resolution has been circulated as document A/54/L.13.

As will be recalled, ever since this item was introduced into the agenda of the General Assembly in 1987, its consideration has made it possible for Member States of the Latin America and the Caribbean to give adequate articulation to their national priorities through the Latin American Economic System (SELA). This articulation has greater relevance in the present context of globalization, a phenomenon in which the various national actors of each of our countries need a fruitful exchange of their experiences in their gradual inclusion.

In this connection, it falls on SELA — a body that has existed for over 27 years — to bring about greater cooperation in support of economic and social development in the region through a mechanism that is flexible and provides for periodic consultations. In 1996, the Latin American Council, the ministerial organ of SELA, adopted a dynamic programme of modernization and restructuring of the organization that consisted mainly of reorienting its programme of work and updating its functioning. This smooth exchange of experiences has been possible thanks to the participation of specialized agencies, United Nations programmes and other organizations.

In 1996, 1997 and early in 1998, SELA developed programmes for technical cooperation between developing countries in the fields of decentralization and support to small and medium-sized businesses.

Peru hopes that, as in earlier years, this draft resolution will once again have the consensus support of the Member States of the United Nations, thereby reflecting the spirit of contribution to the efforts that each region is promoting in seeking to achieve that development is also a participatory and comprehensive process.

Mr. Kerpens (Suriname): I have the honour to address the Assembly in this debate on agenda item 32 on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Allow me at the outset to express the appreciation of CARICOM to the representative of Peru for introducing draft resolution A/54/L.13, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System" I would like to commend it for unanimous adoption by the General Assembly.

Likewise, CARICOM member States take pride in thanking the Secretary-General for his informative report contained in document A/53/420, outlining the various activities in the area of cooperation between the Latin American Economic System (SELA) and the United Nations system, in particular with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Those activities can be characterized as considerable and diversified.

Our present era is characterized by an increased globalization of markets. The ensuing concentration of power and influence lies in the hands of those nations, institutions and individuals that can master the wealth of information on all aspects of human interaction, be it economic, financial, political, social or cultural. It harbours, at the same time, the danger of marginalizing those that cannot adapt successfully to these changes.

Regional institutions like SELA can play an indispensable role in assisting countries, in particular small and vulnerable ones such as CARICOM member States, to make the adaptation process less costly, less painful and speedy by analysing trends of the ongoing globalization process, recommending policy options and promoting efforts towards further integration among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, between the subregions in our hemisphere and between our region and other regions. Through these activities, SELA has contributed to the integration of its member States into the global economy and to the growing, mutually beneficial, interdependent relations that exist between the different subregions of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The member States of CARICOM were therefore very saddened by the tragic event that took place in February 1998, which resulted in the destruction of the premises of the Permanent Secretariat in Caracas. This has been a setback in our institutional capacity to deal with the twin processes of adaptation to fundamental changes at the global level and our efforts to strengthen the process of integration, both within our region and between our region and other regions.

This tragic event has forced the member States to focus their attention not only on restoring the valuable assets of the organization, but also on addressing its institutional vulnerability and inefficiency and on defining ways to improve the difficult financial situation of SELA. Through the decisions adopted at the seventh and eighth special Council meetings and at the twenty-fourth ordinary Council meeting, they have initiated a process

of restructuring and modernization that should eventually equip SELA with the tools to continue to respond in a positive manner to the demands of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Following these changes, SELA will concentrate its future activities on three thematic areas: extra-regional relations, intra-regional relations and regional cooperation. Its work programme, its budget and its human resources management will undergo the necessary changes and adaptations in order to be in a position to fulfil its mandate according to these strategic thematic areas. Enhanced cooperation between SELA and the United Nations in these areas will be beneficial to the United Nations system and to all countries belonging to the Latin American and Caribbean family.

To place the financial situation of the organization on a sound basis, the member States of SELA have adopted the Payment Incentive Programme in order to make available the necessary means for the implementation of its work programme. CARICOM member States pledge their support for these important initiatives and appeal to donor countries and the United Nations system, in particular to the United Nations Development Programme, to continue to contribute to the funding of the work programme and, where possible, to increase their valuable contributions.

The Latin American and Caribbean Economic System remains for CARICOM a valuable instrument in providing information on how to deal with one of the most crucial issues related to development, namely, how to finance development. It is therefore commendable that the twenty-fifth Council meeting, which will be held from 26 to 28 October 1999, has chosen as its central theme "Options for Latin America and the Caribbean vis-à-vis the international financial crisis". That crisis has been a source of concern for CARICOM countries, considering that they too are confronted with obstacles in attracting financial resources for their development.

Based on its experience in this matter, SELA could play a role in helping to define the way the United Nations should deal with the pending issues related to the convening of an international conference on money and finance, which will be discussed later, when the Second Committee resumes the debate on these issues during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

As we witness the closing of the century and the dawning of a new millennium, much attention is rightfully focused on our truly universal Organization, the United Nations, to guide us on the path where we will confront the challenges facing humanity.

How to define human security and how to achieve the goals derived from our concept of what dignifies humanity will probably depend on the extent to which we will be able to make the United Nations an effective instrument to assist us in this endeavour.

In our region, we must take a closer look at regional organizations in order to be able to contribute from our own regional perspective to the achievement of these objectives. Cooperation and mutual assistance between SELA and the United Nations will not only be logical but will undoubtedly make our task a little easier.

CARICOM therefore envisions greater cooperation between SELA and the United Nations as a way to combine the efforts of the region with those of the international system to achieve greater cooperation and coherence in our common struggle for the good of the peoples we represent, and we look forward to a deepening of the existing relations between our two institutions.

In conclusion, the CARICOM member States reiterate their support for the Latin American Economic System, but likewise they are looking forward to concerted actions by that institution to assist them in their efforts to integrate effectively into the global economy.

Mr. Bivero (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Venezuela, as a country that has the privilege of serving as headquarters for the Latin American Economic System (SELA), would like to reiterate its appreciation for the efforts made by the United Nations, through the specialized agencies of the system, to strengthen the cooperation and coordination of the Latin American Economic System in areas of priority interest for the development of our region.

This cooperation is becoming increasingly important at a time when the world Organization and the regional and subregional organizations are beginning to deal with the phenomenon of globalization and are assessing its impact on economic and social development. As pointed out by the delegation of Suriname, in the next few days, on Tuesday and Wednesday, we will be holding in Caracas the twenty-fifth regular meeting of the Latin American Council of SELA, whose main topic will be the options of Latin America and the Caribbean vis-à-vis the international financial crisis. The Permanent

Secretariat has had the support of United Nations bodies in preparing for the debate on this issue.

In the framework of that cooperation with the United Nations, we are pleased to note, *inter alia*, the continuation of the Agreement between the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and SELA on "Communication for the Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean"; the participation of SELA in the fourteenth regional meeting of the International Labour Organization; and the contribution made by Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to the high-level regional meeting entitled "Towards a stable and predictable international financial system and its relationship to social development", convened by the Government of Mexico and in which SELA also participated. Venezuela deems it important that these efforts continue and multiply so that they may contribute to the economic and social development of the region.

With regard to the United Nations system, it is particularly important for the member States of SELA to ensure that the United Nations Development Programme continues to provide financial and technical support to programmes carried out by the Permanent Secretariat with a view to complementing the cooperation and technical-assistance activities of SELA in the region.

Venezuela is pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution contained in document A/54/L.13, which is before the Assembly and was introduced by the delegation of Peru, and we trust that it will be adopted by consensus in this Hall.

The Acting President: I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become co-sponsors of draft resolution A/54/L.13: Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti and Nicaragua.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.13.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.13?

Draft resolution A/54/L.13 was adopted (resolution 54/8).

The Acting President: I shall now call on the representative of Finland, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of vote.

May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Silvennoinen (Finland): I have the honour to take the floor in order to explain the position of the European Union (EU). The EU joined the consensus on draft resolution A/54/L.13 on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System, but at the same time would like to put on record the following observations.

Regarding operative paragraphs 3 and 4, we note that the resolution urges the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the specialized agencies and other organizations, funds and programmes of the United Nations system to renew their contribution and to intensify their support for, and cooperation with, the Latin American Economic System. It is the understanding of the European Union that decisions and agreements on such activities should be made by the Executive Board of UNDP and in the governing bodies of the respective specialized agencies, other organizations, funds and programmes, in accordance with their respective agreed priorities and budget.

We support the request expressed in operative paragraph 5 that a review should be done at an appropriate time to assess the implementation of the agreement between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System, also with a view to evaluating its expediency.

The European Union would like to place on record its concern that for the second successive time, Member States have not been afforded sufficient opportunity to informally consult one another on this resolution, and it requests that, in the interests of transparency and the smooth running of the General Assembly, Member States be given such an opportunity in the future by the early distribution of drafts in advance of their consideration at the plenary.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 32?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.